

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANA 01060 070819Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----002390 070820Z /17

O 070740Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SANA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4043  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SANA 1060

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, ET, SO, US  
SUBJECT: APPROACH BY FORMER SOMALI OFFICIAL

BEGIN SUMMARY: FORMER SOMALI OFFICIAL OMAR MOHALLIM APPROACHED  
DCM RANSOM ON 6 MARCH WITH PLEA FOR US TO ACT TO HALT "INEVIT-  
ABLE" INVASION OF SOMALI BY CUBAN, SOVIET AND ETHIOPIAN FORCES.  
MOHALLIM OFFERED TO CARRY US VIEWS AND ANY MESSAGES TO BARRE.  
END SUMMARY.

1. BUSINESS CONTACTS IN SANA HAD EARLIER INTRODUCED  
DR. OMAR MOHALLIM TO DCM RANSOM. MOHALLIM IS ALLEGEDLY  
TRAVELING IN CONNECTION WITH PLANS FOR A BOTTLING COMPANY IN  
YEMEN. ON 6 MARCH HE CALLED DCM RANSOM AND ASKED FOR AN  
APPOINTMENT.

2. MOHALLIM SAID HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED BY MOHAMED SIAD  
BARRE AT TIME LATTER TOOK POWER. AS FORMER AMBASSADOR TO  
U.S. AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN GOVERNMENT AT TIME OF ITS  
OVERTHROW, HE WAS KEPT IN JAIL FOR SIX YEARS. MOHALLIM  
CLAIMS, HOWEVER, SINCE HIS RELEASE, TO HAVE STRUCK AN  
UNDERSTANDING WITH MOHAMED SIAD BARRE AND EVEN TO HAVE  
GONE ON FACTFINDING MISSIONS FOR BARRE TO CONTACT U.S.  
OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. MOHALLIM CLAIMS TO HAVE URGED  
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BARRE TO HAVE CALLED FOR NEGOTIATIONS WHEN SOMALI OF-  
FENSIVE WAS IN FULL FLOOD AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE  
THOUGHT HE COULD HAVE SOME GREATER INFLUENCE NOW ON  
BARRE IS GETTING NEGOTIATIONS STARTED.

3. MOHALLIM USED BETTER PART OF HALF HOUR TO DESCRIBE  
ELOGUENTLY AND VERY RATIONALLY PREDICAMENT OF SOMALIA IN

FACE OF OVERWHELMING MILITARY MIGHT BEARING DOWN ON IT FROM ETHIOPIA. RANSOM REPLIED THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS IN TOUCH WITH SOMALI OFFICIALS IN MOGADISCIO AND ELSEWHERE AND THEREFORE, SO FAR AS RANSOM KNEW, WE HAD NO NEED FOR AN ADDITIONAL CHANNEL TO PRESIDENT BARRE. HOW, EVER, ON BACKGROUND RANSOM OUTLINED US POSITION OF CEASEFIRE LINKED WITH WITHDRAWAL AND NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT STABILIZING SITUATION AFTERWARDS. RANSOM MADE IT CLEAR THAT USG DEFINITELY SEEKS SOMALI WITHDRAWAL FROM OGADEN AND CEASEFIRE WE FAVOR IS SIMPLY ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI AGREEMENT TO ACCOMMODATE MOST EXPEDITIOUS SOMALI WITHDRAWAL POSSIBLE. RANSOM NOTED OUR THOUGHT THAT NEUTRAL ENTITY LIKE OAU COULD OBSERVE WITHDRAWAL WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE ALL FOREIGN FORCES AS WELL AS SOMALIS AND ALSO ENSURE WELFARE OF INHABITANTS IN COURSE OF WITHDRAWAL AND SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS WE FAVOR ARE FOR BASIC SETTLEMENT OF LONG-STANDING DISPUTES AFTER SOMALI WITHDRAWAL. RANSOM SAID THAT WE HAD ALSO FLOATED IDEA OF SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING BUT, APPARENTLY, IDEA HAD NOT GOTTEN VERY FAR. WE WERE THEREFORE VERY ACTIVELY EXPLORING OTHER MECHANISMS WHICH MIGHT BE USED TO START TALKS AND REACH EARLY AGREEMENT.

4. MOHALLIM REPLIED THAT TIME MAY WELL HAVE RUN OUT FOR SUCH AN APPROACH SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING TO PREVENT FOREIGN FORCES AND ETHIOPIANS FROM CROSSING INTO SOMALIA.  
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HE SAID THAT SUCCESS OF OUR APPROACH COULD WORK ONLY IF WE WISHED TO MAKE SOME "SIGN OF SYMPATHY" WITH BARRE WHO WAS DEEPLY DISILLUSIONED WITH US. MOHALLIM SUGGESTED THAT SPECIFIC STEP WOULD BE TO ALLOW THIRD COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO BOTH US AND SOMALIA TO SUPPLY WEAPONS AND OTHER SUPPORT. RANSOM PROMISED PASS ON THESE VIEWS.

COMMENT: MOHALLIM IS VERY FLUENT AND SOPHISTICATED MAN WHOSE ENGLISH AND MANNER REFLECT DEEP IMPRESSION MADE ON HIM IN YEARS IN UNITED STATES. RANSOM URGED HIM TO VISIT AMBASSADOR LOUGHRAN ON MOHALLIM'S RETURN TO MOGADISCIO IN TWO DAYS BUT MOHALLIM DEMURRED DUE TO POSSIBILITY THAT SECURITY FORCES WOULD MISINTERPRET HIS REASONS FOR VISITING AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO THROW SOME DOUBT ON MOHALLIM'S CLAIM TO HAVE ONLY ACCESS BUT INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT BARRE DESPITE YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT FOR MOHALLIM. NEVERTHELESS, IF DEPARTMENT WISHES, EMBASSY SANA COULD CONTACT MOHALLIM BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE WITH ANY FURTHER MESSAGES OR INFORMATION THAT MIGHT GO BEYOND STATE 56193 OF 4 MARCH WHICH RANSOM RELIED ON HEAVILY IN HIS OUTLINE OF US IDEAS FOR SETTLEMENT.

SCOTES

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PBOR, PEPR, ET, SO, US  
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**Type:** TE  
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Sheryl P. Walter  
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20 Mar 2014  
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